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LIFE, LOVE & MEMORIES



MEMORY LANE

PUBLISHED BY AGE UK OLDHAM

Welcome to our August Newsletter.

Anyone growing up after the war years do you remember the long six weeks holiday you had away from school in August? Days of freedom away from the strict rules of school that existed back then.

The time when, if you had just left Junior (Primary School) and were moving to Grammar or Secondary School, if the school had a uniform towards the end of the holiday you were kitted out with your new clothes. It was usually towards the end of the holiday, in case you grew during the six weeks.

In the days before supermarkets sold school uniforms specialist shops like Dugdales on Manchester Road were the only places to go and were expensive so unless you were extremely fortunate the uniform had to last and was bought accordingly, somewhat on the big side.



Does this ring any bells? 'Don't worry you'll soon grow into it!'

For most kids there was no big fuss about moving to a bigger school. No photos, just off you went feeling all grown up in your new blazer hoping that you had mastered the art of tying your tie and your cap or beret would stay on your head.

Do you remember the first days at your new school, copying the time table from the blackboard, silently groaning, when you saw 'double maths', or the subject you hated the most? The first time you were given homework and how you felt when you realised that from being one of the oldest at the school you were the little kid again?

On the plus side some senior schools had tuck shops that primary schools didn't have. Remember bags of Butter Puffs and how big Wagon Wheels were.



Albert Beaumont Wood

Albert Beaumont Wood, better known as A B Wood, was a British physicist, known for his pioneering work in the field of underwater acoustics and sonar.

Pickhill Mews, Uppermill

He was born at 22 Pickhill, Uppermill, in 1890, and educated at Huddersfield Technical College followed by Manchester University, from where he graduated with 1st Class Honours in 1912.



Manchester University



Liverpool University

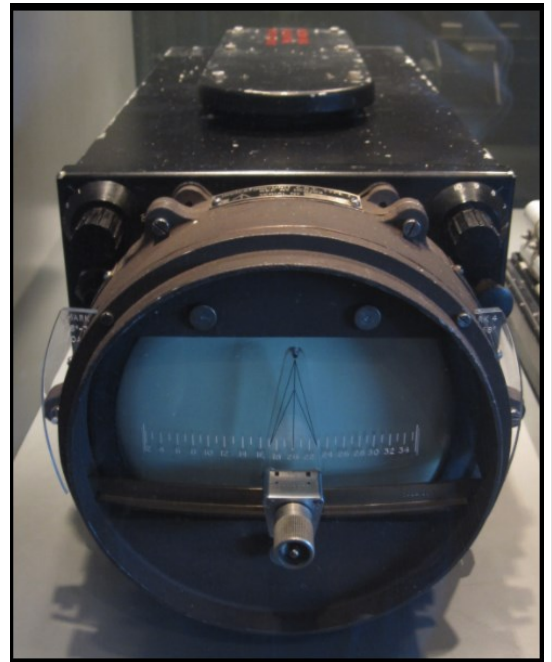
In 1914 he was appointed a research fellow at the University of Liverpool and then a lecturer in Physics.



Initially working alongside Sir Ernest Rutherford - the man credited with “splitting the atom” - he was recruited by the newly created Board of Invention and Research in October 1915, to help with the UK war effort against Germany. He was one of 2 research physicists with a brief to work on anti-submarine defence.

In 1916 A B Wood married Ethel who was a great supporter of his work.

In 1917, working under the British Board of Invention and Research, Canadian physicist Robert William Boyle and A B Wood, produced a prototype active sound detection system. The work was undertaken in utmost secrecy and named ASDIC. During World War 2 the Americans developed a similar system which they called SONAR and this term eventually replaced the British ASDIC.



Boyle and Wood invent ASDIC
later renamed SONAR

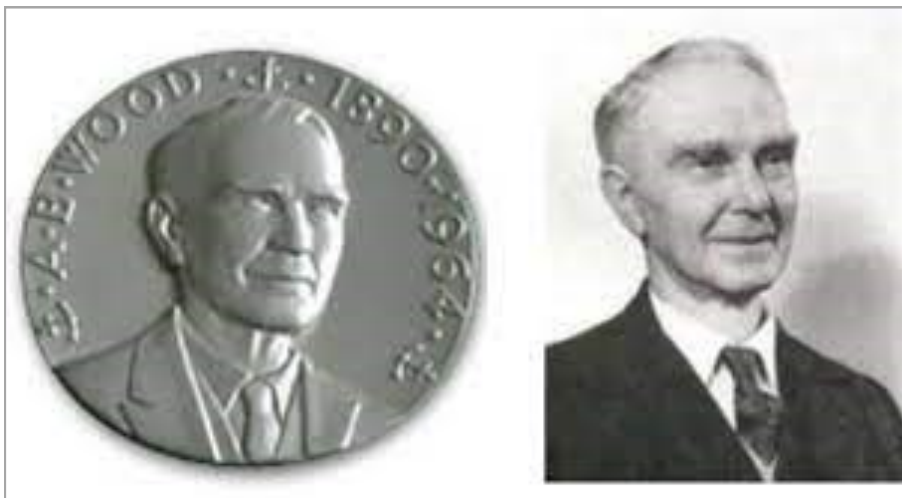


A B Wood as Honorary Vice-
President of University of Liverpool
Physical Society 1914-1915

A B Wood was awarded a DSc degree (which is higher than a PhD) by his university in 1919, and became a Fellow of the Physical Society in 1920. He was a founder member of the Institute of Physics.

At the outbreak of World War 2, he turned his talents to inventing counter measures to the German's use of magnetic mines which they used to disrupt food supplies to Britain. Winston Churchill invited A B Wood to visit him to discuss possible counter measures. A B Wood is the pioneer of British magnetic mines technique. The 1st German mine was recovered in November 1939.

He formally retired from the Admiralty Research Laboratories in 1950, but returned to continue his work on underwater sound. He spent a year at the US Naval Electronics Laboratory shortly before his death.



He received many honours during his lifetime.

In 1939 he was awarded the title, Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE), in recognition of his work on dismantling a German magnetic mine at the start of the 2nd World War.

In 1951 he was awarded the Duddell Medal by the Institute of Physics, and in 1961 the pioneers of Underwater Acoustics medal by the Acoustical Society of America. The AB Wood Medal is awarded by the Institute of Acoustics in his name.

In 1930 a book written by him, "A Textbook of Sound" was published. A third revised edition was published in 1955.

AB Wood's two sisters were very proud of his achievements.

He left Saddleworth around the age of 20 years but would always return to visit family every Easter.

His pioneering work, which helped to save countless lives during both world wars, was eventually honoured in Saddleworth more than 50 years after his death. It was Roy Crozier, a local historian, who launched the AB Wood campaign.

In 2022 a blue plaque commemorating Wood's achievements was unveiled at his childhood home in Uppermill.



Also in recent times an exhibition of his life was held at Saddleworth Museum.

A B Wood was a brilliant scientist who was fêted on both sides of the Atlantic. A medal named in his honour is awarded in alternate years in the UK/Europe and the USA/Canada.

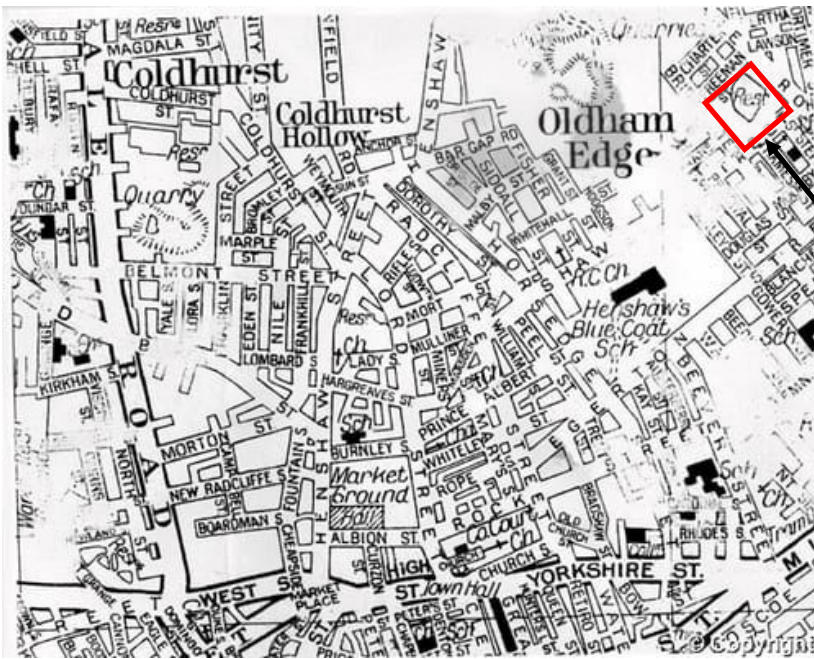
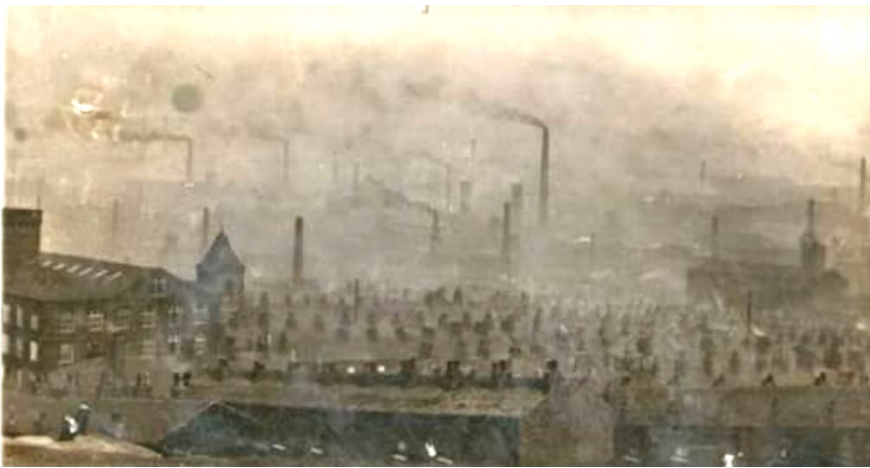
He died suddenly while on holiday in July 1964.

REMEMBER WHEN - OUR PLAYGROUNDS

The 'Crabby' was a field bordered by parts of Bridgewater Street, Freeman Street the back of Edge Lane Road and at the bottom end it faced St Stephen's church. It was the playground for many kids until the 1960's when vast redevelopment took place on St Mary's and Shaw Road. In the late 1950's an Adventure Playground was built on the site using old tires for swings and climbing frames, something more adventurous than the swings and slides that were in the local parks at the time.

The field got its name from the Crabtree Mill that stood on the site until being demolished. A story passed down the generations was that a young boy had lost his life whilst playing near the mill lodge.

This is a very old photo of the Crabtree Mill on the far left St. Stephen's Church just opposite.



On the picture above you can see the corner of the playground. The houses on Bridgewater Street and the hills of Oldham Edge, top right.

Freeman St
Edge Lane Rd
Crabby
Bridgewater St
St Stephens Church

We hope this brings back memories for any of you who played on the 'Crabby' If you have memories of places you played whilst growing up or any photos and you would like to share them with our readers please contact Anne at Age UK Oldham on 0161 633 0213 or email lifestory@ageukoldham.org.uk

PLACES OF OLDHAM - OLDHAM EDGE

In 1879 a remarkable fossil forest was uncovered in a sandstone quarry on Oldham Edge.

James Nield, who ran a printing business in the town, realised the huge scientific importance of this find.

The image shown right is from a lantern slide in the Gallery Oldham collection and shows James Nield sitting at the base of one of the fossil trunks.

Sitting around the quarry, the workmen and their picks and shovels can be seen.



Oldham Edge is a large area standing at 247 meters above sea level, it's visible from many parts of Oldham. It overlooks Higginshaw Village to the east, Royton to the north, and Oldham centre to the west and south.

In the 1950s the Tank Regiment based at the Drill Hall on Rifle Street used to train on the Edge. Today it is covered with trees but in the 1950s there was a lot of barren land. One hill was known by all the local children as 'Hill 60' and at the far side of the hills leading up Shaw Street to the back of the Blue Coat school are the Ropy Steps named after the nearby Rope and Twine Works that you can see in the picture. The building is no longer there but the steps remain.

Ropy Steps, Shaw Street



Years ago there were some stunning views from the Edge. The photo on the right is looking towards Royton and beyond. It's probably been taken from the top of Crompton Street, Coldhurst Hollow area.



They Should Have Asked my Husband

You know, this world is complicated and imperfect and oppressed.
And it's not hard to feel timid, apprehensive and depressed,
It seems that all around us, tides of questions ebb and flow,
And people want solutions but they don't know where to go.

Opinions abound but who is wrong and who is right?
People need a prophet, a diffuser of the light,
Someone they can turn to as the crises rage and swirl,
Someone with the remedy, the wisdom and the pearl...

Well, they should have asked my husband, he can sort out any mess,
He can rejuvenate the railways, he can cure the NHS,
So any little niggle, anything you want to know,
Just run it past my husband, wind him up and let him go.

Congestion on the motorways, free holidays for thugs,
The damage to the ozone layer, refuges, drugs,
These may defeat the brain of the politician bloke,
But present it to my husband, he will solve it at a stroke.

Continued...

continued...

He'll clarify the situation, he will make it crystal clear,
You'll feel the glazing of your eyeballs and the bending of your ear.
Corruption at the top, he's an authority on that,
And the Mafia, Gaddafi and Yasser Arafat.

Upon these areas he brings his intellect to shine,
In a great compelling voice that's twice as loud as yours or mine,
I often wonder what it must be like to be so strong,
Infallible, articulate, self-confident and wrong.

When it comes to tolerance he hasn't got a lot,
Joy-Riders should be guillotined and muggers should be shot,
The sound of his own voice becomes like music to his ears,
And he hasn't got an inkling that he's boring us to tears.

My friends don't call so often, they have busy lives I know,
But it's not every day you want to hear a windbag suck and blow.
Encyclopaedias! On them we never have to call,
Why clutter up the bookshelf when my husband...knows it all.

Do you know any of these historic buildings from the Oldham/Saddleworth Areas?:



TURN PAGE FOR ANSWERS:

1. 10 Houses, Alt Lane, Oldham
2. Tumbling Bank Terrace, Lees, Oldham
3. Fallsworth Lodge, off Broadway, Chadderton
4. Albert Mount, Derker, Oldham
5. Foxdenton Hall, Foxdenton Lane, Chadderton.
6. Weavers' Houses, Woods Lane, Dobcross, Saddleworth.

Quiz provided by Viv White

QUIZ – QUESTIONS

1. Which best selling author wrote – The Devils's Alternative, The Dogs of War and The Odessa File?
2. Why is the Calcutta Cup for rugby so named?
3. Who, in Greek mythology, destroyed the monsters Python and Cyclops?
4. Which Englishman invented the lathe in 1800?
5. How many world professional snooker championships did Joe Davis win?
6. Which London street is associated with the publication of newspapers?
7. What was Casanova's occupation at the time of his death?
8. Which religious group is collectively known as The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints?
9. What is the name of the perfume given off by wine?
10. Who shot Ronald Reagan in March 1981?
11. In which city would you find The Spanish Steps?
12. In classical mythology what name was given to the companions of Jason, who accompanied him on his quest to seek out and retrieve the Golden Fleece?
13. How many nations took part in the first modern Olympics in 1896?
14. What is the currency of Czechoslovakia?
15. What was the name of Henry VIII's favourite warship, which was raised from the Solent where it had lain since 1545?
16. What is the singular of scampi?
17. In golf, what is the traditional name for the number 10 iron?
18. Who designed St. Paul's Cathedral?
19. What is known as the 'actors' Bible?
20. Who do you associate with the famous painting called Sunflowers?

Answers to July Quiz

1. Frederick Forsyth
2. It was made out of rupees left in the bank by the disbanded Calcutta Rugby Club in 1878
3. Apollo
4. Henry Maudslay
5. 15
6. Fleet Street
7. Librarian
8. The Mormons
9. Bouquet
10. John Hinckley
11. Rome
12. The Argonauts
13. 12
14. Koruna
15. Mary Rose
16. Scampo
17. Wedge
18. Sir Christopher Wren
19. The stage
20. Vincent Van Gogh

WW2 PEOPLE'S WAR

A Child's Impression - June Pyke

I was born in Staines, Middlesex in June 1937, an only child. At five years old I attended Wyatt Road School, Staines.

My maternal grandmother was deceased, but when young she had been in service with Margaret Arnott from South Wales.

When Margaret Arnott returned to South Wales to marry William Brown, my grandmother corresponded with her. After my grandmother's death, my mother continued the correspondence.

When I was seven, flying bombs were a regular occurrence, so my parents evacuated me to Aunt Margaret and Uncle Bill in Cowbridge, Glamorganshire. Aunt Margaret was very Victorian and had no children. They lived in the Town Hall where Aunt Margaret was caretaker and Uncle Bill worked at the local brewery. My mother and I travelled on an overflowing steam train to Cardiff, then by bus to Cowbridge. My mother went home next day leaving me knowing no one.



Town Hall, Cowbridge, Glamorgan. South Wales

continued...

Continued...

The Town Hall was my new home, was very old, built as a prison about 1640. Our living accommodation was part of the original building and would have been the warders quarters. The kitchen had a flagstone floor, a high window with a stone shelf about three feet below it. No running water only a sink and tap from an outside rainwater butt. Drinking water had to be collected in big urns from the newer part of the building.

There was electricity for lighting but heating the flat iron and cooking was done on a black leaded cooking range where the fire burned every day. The walls, including the bedrooms were eighteen inches thick.

The kitchen had two iron studded doors four inches thick, one leading to a corridor just beyond the kitchen which went to a store passage and old stone cells. This passage was access to the newer part of the building and the route to the toilet. It had five cells along one side, the first of which my aunt used as a pantry, the others for various storage purposes. This passage terrified me, especially when I left the light on to come back, but my aunt switched it off to economise, which meant returning at a run, heart pounding, in the dark.

The newer part of the building, probably early Victorian, consisted of a hall upstairs with a stage. Downstairs the council chambers, mayors parlour and robe room, toilets and an under floor well. Saturday night there would be a dance packed with service men and women, land girls and locals. Saturday morning my aunt would walk round the dance floor dropping wax shavings on the old boards. In the evening she took charge of the cloakroom, I was allowed to hand out the tickets for coat collection and then sit at the side of the stage to listen to the band, watching the dancers twirling under a glittering ball.

School and life was difficult, but gradually I re-adjusted and made friends. I returned home after VE Day, but have been back many times since.

Part of the old building



Jean's recipes

CHICORY & PARMA HAM GRATINÉE

Preparation time 30 mins plus 25 mins baking.

Ingredients

6 long slender heads of chicory

3ozs Gruyere cheese

3ozs Parma ham

For the sauce a la crème:

½ oz butter

1 tbs plain flour

¼ pint milk

5 fl oz of double cream

salt & pepper

oil for greasing

Method

Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 5 /190C/375F

Boil the chicory in salted water for 5 mins.

Drain, cover it with cold water and simmer it again for a further 12-15 mins until the chicory is tender.

Grate the Gruyere cheese and slice the Parma ham thinly.

Melt the butter in a heavy pan and gradually stir in the flour with a wooden spoon.

Add the milk slowly, stirring until the sauce thickens.

Season to taste, and simmer for 5 mins over a low heat.

Add the cream and simmer for a further 3-4 mins.

Add half the cheese to the sauce, season it to taste and dribble a little of it over the bottom of a greased, overproof dish.

Drain the chicory, arrange it in the dish, and then cover it with the slices of ham.

Spoon over the rest of the sauce and sprinkle on the remaining cheese.

Bake for 20-25 mins until golden brown and bubbling.

SCHOOL REPORTS

Before the days of political correctness, teachers 'told how it was' on their pupils school reports. Here are some of the comments received by the rich and famous:

'Stephen has glaring faults and they have certainly glared at us this term' –
(*Stephen Fry, actor and writer*)

'Jilly has set herself an extremely low standard, which she has failed to maintain' –
(*Jilly Cooper, author*)

'Is a constant trouble to everybody and is always in some scrape or other. He cannot be trusted to behave himself anywhere' – (*Winston Churchill, Prime Minister*)

'Certainly on the road to failure... hopeless... rather a clown in class... wasting other pupils' time' – (*John Lennon, musician*)

'It would seem that Briers thinks he is running the school and not me. If this attitude persists, one of us will have to leave' – (*Richard Briers, actor*)

'He must devote less of his time to sport if he wants to be a success. You can't make a living out of football' – (*Gary Lineker, footballer*)

'He will either go to prison or become a millionaire' – (*Sir Richard Branson, entrepreneur*)

'He will never amount to anything' – (*Albert Einstein, physicist*)

'A persistent muddler. Vocabulary negligible, sentences malconstructed. He reminds me of a camel' – (*Roald Dahl, author*)

Here are a couple more comments from years gone by:

'The improvement in his handwriting has revealed his inability to spell.'

'The tropical forests are safe when John enters the woodwork room, for his projects are small and his progress is slow.'

Do you remember your school reports, any of these comments 'ring a bell'?

Talks too much in class, doesn't concentrate enough, could do better. Easily distracted!

ANIMAL CORNER

ROB THE PARADOG



Rob was known as the Para Dog, who completed more than 20 parachute drops in daring SAS missions during World War II, often behind enemy lines.

He was the only dog ever to be awarded both the PDSA Dickin Medal for Gallantry known as the animal Victoria Cross, and the RSPCA Red Collar for Valour as well as a lifetime supply of biscuits.

Rob died in 1952 aged 12 yrs.

The black and white collie was bought as a puppy from a farm in nearby Ellesmere, Shropshire, in 1939 for five shillings (25p), and lived his early years with the Bayne family in nearby Tetchill as their farm dog and pet. During his time as a farm dog Rob used to help settle the chicks in their houses at night, picking them up in his mouth and tucking them in under their mothers. After his wartime exploits, Rob settled back into life on the farm, occasionally making public appearances to help raise funds for returning PoWs. The Bayne's son Basil said he learned to walk as a boy by holding on to Rob's tail or clutching his coat.

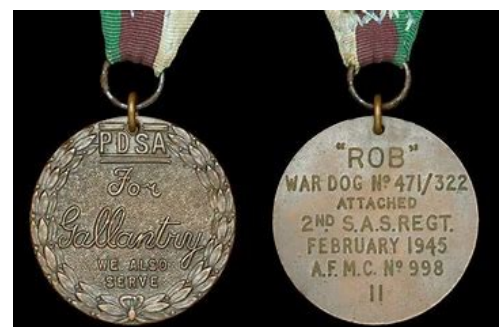
They volunteered him as a war dog and he was signed up in 1942. Following action in the North Africa infantry campaign, from 1943 he became the first war dog to serve with the SAS, taking part in sabotage missions in Italy.

Rob became so famous that books have been written about him, and his story featured on the front page of the Radio Times in 1989.



Rob receiving the Dickin Medal for Gallantry.

Rob's medals



SPORTING GREATS

Babe Zaharias



Mildred Ella "Babe" Didrikson Zaharias was an American athlete who excelled in golf, basketball, baseball, and track and field. She won two gold medals in track and field at the 1932 Summer Olympics before turning to professional golf and winning 10 LPGA major championships

Born: 26 June 1911, Port Arthur, Texas, United States

Died: 27 September 1956, John Sealy Hospital, Galveston, Texas, United States.

Spouse: George Zaharias (m. 1938–1956)

Parents: Ole, Hannah

Hall of fame inductions: 1951, 1976

Before there was an LPGA (The Ladies Professional Golf Association) Babe Zaharias was playing golf and winning tournaments. If she had not succumbed to an early death from cancer in the 1950s, it is difficult to tell how many tournaments she would have won.

Zaharias had been an Olympic athlete and turned to golf where she gained international fame. She won 10 majors and 41 LPGA events, 48 tournaments worldwide in all. She was one of the founding members of the LPGA in 1950.

She was the first woman to play in a men's professional event, the LA Open in 1945. She shot 76-81 to make the two-day cut, but there was a three day cut and she did not make that.

She played in the Phoenix Open, where she shot 77-72-75-80 finishing in 33rd place. In Tuscon, she shot 307 and finished tied for 42nd.

While she was given an exemption to LA, she qualified for the Phoenix and Tucson events.

AWARDS AND HONORS:

Olympic Games All-America team Presidential Medal of Freedom (2021) British Ladies Amateur Championship (1947) United States Women's Amateur Championship (1946).

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Life Story

Every life has a story...

